UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FIFTY-FIRST SESSION

Official Records

THIRD COMMITTEE
44th meeting
held on
Tuesday, 19 November 1996
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 44th MEETING

Chairman: Mrs. ESPINOSA (Mexico)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 110: HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS (continued)

(b) HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS (continued)

(c) HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATIONS AND REPORTS OF SPECIAL RAPPORTEURS AND REPRESENTATIVES (continued)

(d) COMPREHENSIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF AND FOLLOW-UP TO THE VIENNA DECLARATION AND PROGRAMME OF ACTION (continued)

(e) REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (continued)

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.3/51/SR.44
13 August 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

96-82208 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 110: HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS (continued) (A/51/3 (Parts I and II), A/51/81, 87, 90, 114, A/51/208-S/1996/543, A/51/210 and A/51/462-S/1996/831; A/C.3/51/9)

(b) HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS (continued) (A/51/153, 170, 201, 290, 395, 453 and Add.1, 457, 480, 506, 536, 539, 542 and Add.1 and 2, 552, 555, 558, 561, 641 and 650; A/C.3/51/6)

(c) HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATIONS AND REPORTS OF SPECIAL RAPPORTEURS AND REPRESENTATIVES (continued) (A/51/80-S/1996/194, A/51/189, A/51/203-E/1996/86, A/51/204, 271, 347, 459, 460, 466, 478, 479, 481, 483 and Add.1 and Add.2, 490, 496 and Add.1, 507, A/51/532-S/1996/864, A/51/538, 556, 557, A/51/651-S/1996/902, A/51/657, 660, A/51/663-S/1996/927 and A/51/665-S/1996/931; A/C.3/51/3, 8 and 10-13)

(d) COMPREHENSIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF AND FOLLOW-UP TO THE VIENNA DECLARATION AND PROGRAMME OF ACTION (continued) (A/51/36)

(e) REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (continued) (A/51/36)

1. Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh) said that the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action had set the agenda for activities in the human rights field. In particular, it had underlined the importance of the right to development and the interrelationship between democracy, development and human rights. His delegation was therefore favourable to the creation of a separate branch within the Centre for Human Rights concerned solely with the promotion of the right to development.

2. While his delegation recognized the need to restructure the Centre, it was concerned at the manner in which the process was being conducted. There had not been sufficient consultation with Member States, and, while the restructuring should aim to enhance efficiency, the priorities and mandate of the various entities comprising the United Nations human rights machinery must be respected. Bangladesh valued the work of the various special rapporteurs and representatives and always considered their reports carefully. However, his delegation was concerned at the selective presentation of facts in the report of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on extrajudicial, summary or arbitration executions (A/51/457). The section on violations of the right to life of persons belonging to national, ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities made reference to the Chakmas in Bangladesh. Yet, in the section on violations of the right to life and terrorism, the Special Rapporteur had omitted to mention the killings of hundreds of civilians by armed insurgents. Contrary to the Special Rapporteur's assertion, the Bangladesh Government would have been willing to grant his request to visit the country.

3. His Government's commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights, and in particular the rights of women, children and minorities, was

reflected in the Bangladeshi Constitution and legislation. A law reform commission had been created to advise the Government on the implementation of international human rights instruments and on the establishment of a national human rights commission. His Government had requested the assistance of the relevant United Nations agencies with that work.

4. His delegation recognized the important role of the United Nations in promoting and protecting human rights. It welcomed such initiatives as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) project entitled "Towards a culture of peace" (A/51/395), which aimed to encourage collaboration among nations through education with a view to achieving greater understanding of and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. He called upon the Committee to consider the UNESCO project under a separate agenda item at the fifty-second session.

5. Mr. ARDA (Turkey) said that article 30 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights related to human rights violations by any State, group or person. However, current human rights mechanisms failed to cover most contemporary forms of human rights violations. Most armed clashes at the current time occurred within States; and most non-State perpetrators of violations used indiscriminate violence as a means to achieve their goals. Such acts of terrorism against innocent civilians clearly constituted human rights violations.

6. Turkey was struggling to eliminate externally encouraged terrorism and, at the same time, spared no effort to enhance its multi-party democratic system and further improve the enjoyment of human rights. His Government constantly reviewed its legislation, considering amendments to existing laws in order to expand the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Turkish citizens.

7. Turkey dealt with claims of human rights violations with utmost care and endeavoured to bring all perpetrators of such violations to justice. Since 1987, Turkish citizens had the right to petition the European Commission of Human Rights; and in 1988 it had ratified the European and the United Nations conventions against torture. In 1990 his Government had recognized the compulsory jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights. The international legal instruments to which Turkey was a party were an integral part of Turkish law and superseded domestic provisions incompatible with those instruments.

8. All human rights violations by States, groups or individuals should be thoroughly investigated and any failure to do so should not be tolerated by national institutions or the international community. On the other hand, allegations concerning human rights situations in other countries must not be used for domestic political consumption. Turkey supported the efforts to ensure the greatest possible enjoyment of human rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Establishing peace and a favourable human rights environment in that country would be impossible, however, unless the perpetrators of the genocidal atrocities and ethnic cleansing were brought to justice.

9. Mrs. ROMULUS (Haiti) said that her delegation commended the role of the Organization in promoting universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and welcomed the results achieved in many States, including Haiti. In 1995, Haitians had witnessed for the first time the peaceful transfer of power

between democratically elected heads of State. The elections had been conducted in a climate of transparency, with all parties enjoying freedom of expression. The new Government intended to consolidate the democratic reforms initiated by its predecessor and to continue the rebuilding of human rights institutions.

10. The Haitian armed forces, implicated in numerous human rights violations, had been replaced by a national police force under the Ministry of Justice. Its officers had quickly proved their competence to protect life and property and maintain public order. However, given the lack of resources, the police were still unable to respond to all the demands placed upon them and some abuses of authority had been reported. Her Government was making every effort to ensure that the police were more professional, better equipped and carried out their duties with due regard for human rights.

11. The impartial administration of justice was a prerequisite if the principle of the rule of law was to be translated into reality. Accordingly, her Government was drafting legislation to guarantee the independence of the judiciary and had established a national academy at which more than 400 judges had been trained. In addition, the Haitian Parliament was considering a draft framework for judicial reform aimed at remedying certain inadequacies of the legal system. Various measures had been implemented to modernize the penal system and the President of the Republic had made a number of recommendations with regard to prison conditions.

12. Her Government was convinced of the link between democratization and human rights. Political, economic and social rights were interdependent and their promotion must be approached in a coordinated manner. The most important result of the Government's efforts in that area had been the raising of public awareness of those issues and the increased public participation in political affairs. The progress achieved had been made possible, in part, by the support of the international community and, in particular, the assistance of the International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH). While much remained to be done, her Government was confident that it had laid the foundations for building a stable society. Political reform must, however, go hand in hand with social and economic development to ensure the successful transition from moribund dictatorship to fledgling democracy.

13. Mr. ABDULLAH (Malaysia), referring to the interim report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions (A/51/457), said his delegation was concerned that Malaysia was cited as one of the countries to which the Special Rapporteur had appealed on behalf of individuals fearing imminent extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary execution, including imminent carrying-out of death sentences. In addition, Malaysia was one of the countries from which the Special Rapporteur had requested information regarding extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions alleged to have taken place. While it was true that, under Malaysian law, certain crimes were punishable by death, due process of law was strictly observed in all capital cases. Persons charged with capital offences were presumed innocent until proven guilty. After conviction, they had the right to appeal to a higher court and, if the appeal failed, to seek clemency from the monarch.

14. In his report, the Special Rapporteur expressed doubt as to the deterrent effect of capital punishment and urged countries in which it was still applied

to abolish it. Such a view showed little understanding of the factors which could lead a country to impose the death penalty. His Government was convinced that, given the gravity of the drug problem throughout the world, the only appropriate sentence for drug-related offences was death. The mandatory death sentence stipulated under Malaysian law proved to be a powerful deterrent, enabling his Government to contain the problem of drug trafficking.

15. His delegation welcomed the reports of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the former Yugoslavia (A/51/651-S/1996/902, A/51/663-S/1996/927 and A/51/665-S/1996/931). The recent holding of presidential elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina was an encouraging sign. All parties must now accept the results of the elections and the international community must ensure that the country's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity were respected. The continued presence of the multinational Implementation Force (IFOR) beyond its current mandate, due to expire on 20 December 1996, was necessary to maintain peace and security. As the implementation of the Dayton Agreement proceeded, there must be a stronger focus on institution-building and the re-establishment of an adequate law-enforcement system, and measures must be taken to facilitate the return of refugees. His delegation wished to reiterate its support for the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and its strong conviction that ethnic cleansing must be punished. It should be of the deepest concern to the international community that in certain parts of the former Yugoslavia the perpetrators of such dreadful acts were still at large.

16. Turning to the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/51/36), he said that, while his delegation recognized the need to restructure the Centre for Human Rights, it believed that the concerns of Member States should be taken more fully into account. As the restructuring was carried out, the provisions of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action must be borne in mind, in particular the concept of the interdependence of human rights. Civil and political rights must not be emphasized at the expense of economic and social rights, such as the right to development. An evaluation of the restructuring should be carried out at the end of the period of transition.

17. Ms. GORGIEVA (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) said that her delegation highly appreciated and supported the efforts of the international community and the important role of the United Nations in promoting and protecting minority rights, as one of the essential accomplishments of democracy. Those efforts had been reflected in the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 47/135.

18. Individuals had the right to express the feeling of belonging to a national minority, and they must not suffer disadvantages due to their exercise of that right. Her Government was convinced that the existence of minorities was a matter of fact and not of law. The Republic of Macedonia, like other Balkan States, was not ethnically homogenous. The existence of national minorities enriches societies and represented the basis for building friendly relations and establishing constructive cooperation among States. The promotion of minority rights was crucial to stability in the entire Balkan region.

19. Her Government was committed to the protection and promotion of the rights of national minorities. Guided by a tradition of inter-ethnic relations in the spirit of mutual respect and tolerance, her Government had used the period of transition in the country to improve the compatibility of its legislation and practice with international standards. The protection of minority rights was regulated by a clear and comprehensive legal framework and the special treatment of minorities was provided for at the constitutional level. All minorities in the Republic of Macedonia enjoyed equal treatment and equal rights. The country's legislation complied fully with international standards and, in certain spheres, went beyond them. Such standards should be observed by all States in the region. Her Government was implementing a policy of affirmative action to enhance the integration of persons belonging to national minorities while still maintaining their specific national features. Positive results had been achieved in the fields of education and State administration.

20. In cases of human rights violations, judicial protection must be guaranteed. Regrettably, where alleged violations of minority rights occurred, political means were frequently resorted to and there was an insufficient use of judicial protection mechanisms at the national level, which should be exhausted before any recourse was had to the relevant international organizations. In order to strengthen the rule of law, special attention must be given to raising awareness of mechanisms available to citizens for the protection of their rights.

21. The international community should develop a comparative approach to the various minority rights situations in the Balkan region, in order to identify and offer solutions to real problems and to salute positive examples. That was the aim of her country's proposal for the preparation of a study on the position of national minorities in that region. She hoped that the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities would find the proposal an inspiration and a genuine challenge.

22. Mr. REZVANI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that regional institutions and instruments played a key role in the promotion and protection of human rights, and were capable of reflecting regional political, social, cultural and economic factors. That was particularly true in the Asia-Pacific region, which was characterized by its rich diversity. The Asia-Pacific countries would shortly convene a workshop in Amman, Jordan, to discuss common principles and explore strategies for the establishment of regional arrangements. The Islamic Republic of Iran had actively participated in the process and would continue its endeavours to build common understanding and agreements.

23. The follow-up to the World Conference on Human Rights should focus on general matters in which improvements would affect all substantive themes. International coordination of human rights activities and the strengthening and rationalization of United Nations human rights mechanisms were essential to that process; they would improve the effectiveness of the Organization in promoting and protecting human rights worldwide. His delegation hoped that current efforts to adapt human rights mechanisms to current and future needs would enjoy the full cooperation of all regional groups and would quickly achieve success.

24. Non-selectivity, impartiality and objectivity were the most essential requirements for a just and balanced treatment of all human rights, negligence

of which would bring about frustration in the entire system. Despite the strong reaffirmation of those concepts by many United Nations resolutions and declarations, there was still reluctance on the part of some United Nations mechanisms and institutions to deal with blatant violations of human rights in many parts of the world. Those violations manifested themselves in various forms and in different contexts; whether it was the right to development or the right to freedom of expression, all such violations involved the victimization of individuals or peoples, and warranted equal attention by the international community. All United Nations human rights mechanisms and institutions should endeavour to ensure strict non-selectivity and objectivity. That should be the spirit of all activities in the follow-up to the World Conference.

Rights of reply

25. Mr. DAVID (Israel) said that the representative of Lebanon had once again taken advantage of the right of free speech in the Third Committee to attack Israel. He recalled that Lebanon had traditionally served as a base for various terrorist groups whose goals were to inflict damage and destruction on Israel and to kill as many Israelis as possible, thus violating the most elementary human right, the right to life.

26. The issue of concern to Israel and Lebanon concerned the right and responsibility of any sovereign State, including Israel, to defend itself against repeated attacks upon its citizens. When civilians had unfortunately been killed during Israeli counter-attacks, it had been due to mistakes for which Israel had apologized. That was in sharp contrast to the attacks against Israel from Lebanese territory which primarily targeted civilians. It was regrettable that Lebanon refused to resolve its conflict with Israel. Time and again, Israel had reiterated that it had no claims on Lebanese territory and maintained its commitment to that country's integrity. The Lebanese Government should bring an end to the acts of aggression perpetrated against Israel almost daily from Lebanese territory. Unfortunately, Lebanon currently refused to resolve its problems with Israel through bilateral negotiations.

27. If human rights were of any meaning to Lebanon, then it must ensure that no armed or terrorist forces used Lebanese territory as a base for attacks against Israel. He called upon the Lebanese Government to enter immediately into negotiations with Israel to put an end to the vicious cycle of attacks and counter-attacks.

28. Mrs. ILLO (Niger) recalled that the representative of Ireland, speaking on behalf of the European Union at the 42nd meeting, had seen fit to mention the Niger in his statement.

29. Her delegation wished to reaffirm that the democratic process had been completely restored in the Niger. Political parties and human rights groups were free to meet wherever, whenever and however they wished. She recalled that parliamentary elections were to be held in November 1996, at which time the citizens of the country would freely elect their representatives to the National Assembly. That new proof of the vitality of the country's young democracy demonstrated yet again the determination of its people and leaders to ensure respect for international standards in the area of human rights.

30. Ms. ZHANG Fengkun (China) said that her delegation categorically rejected the groundless attacks upon China made by a number of delegations including those of Australia, Canada and Ireland. They should put aside their biased and arrogant attitudes. The Chinese Government, while committing itself to the promotion of economic development, had strengthened the country's democracy and legal system, with special attention to economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights. China had achieved political stability and economic growth, and its people were living happily in peace and building their country with unprecedented confidence and pride. China's progress in the field of human rights could not be written off by anyone, and the repeated lies of a few Western countries were only lies and could not change the facts.

31. Under the Chinese Constitution, all were equal before the law, and whoever violated the law should be put on trial. The Constitution also provided for the independence of the judicial system. The judgement passed according to the law in a particular case was entirely an internal affair, and no organization, individual or country had the right to interfere. Those who pointed an accusing finger at China often described themselves as "democratic" countries, yet they failed to respect the judicial independence of other countries and made indiscrete comments and wanton accusations, as a result of which one could only doubt their motives.

32. Before democratic reforms had been introduced, the old Tibet had practised a feudal serfdom system involving the integration of religion with politics and the dictatorship of the clergy and aristocracy. Serf owners, while representing only 5 per cent of the population, had owned 100 per cent of the land, and there had been no human rights to speak of. Since the democratic reforms, fundamental changes had taken place, the feudal serfdom system had been abolished, and the Tibetan people, together with the other 55 ethnic groups in China, had become the masters of their country. Those who opposed such changes no doubt would wish to force the broad masses of the Tibetan people to become serfs once again.

33. A few Western countries kept silent regarding human rights violations within their own borders while peddling their political system and values to others under the banner of human rights. They attacked and vilified the peoples and Governments of a number of developing countries in an attempt to alter the social systems and development policies chosen by those countries. However, the days when China could be trampled upon by others at will were long gone. China would never bully other countries, nor tolerate interference by any country in its internal affairs.

34. Mr. ELMUFTI (Sudan), replying to the statement made by the representative of Ireland on behalf of the European Union at the 42nd meeting, and to the statements made at the 43rd meeting by Canada and Norway, said that the Special Rapporteur himself, who had recently visited the Sudan, had unequivocally admitted that he had not verified some alleged violations, and had said that he would address and analyse them in his final report in 1997. Reference to such allegations was therefore premature. Nevertheless, the Government of the Sudan was currently conducting a series of investigations, and findings to date had proved that many of the allegations were unfounded. He did not therefore believe that the European Union was in a position to asses the need for human rights field officers in the Sudan, an assessment which the Commission on Human Rights had been mandated to conduct in 1997.

35. The European Union, Canada and Norway had been selective in their approach, ignoring the other recommendations and conclusions of the Special Rapporteur, such as his call for support for the practical measures taken by the Government of the Sudan in order to investigate allegations and improve the flow of information to competent United Nations bodies.

36. In accordance with the 1993 Vienna Declaration, the European Union, Canada and Norway had an obligation to eradicate extreme poverty and alleviate the external debt burden in all least developed countries, including the Sudan. However, they had never made any attempt to address such obligations in their statements, preferring to pursue a confrontational approach emphasizing civil and political rights at the expense of economic rights, despite the fact that human rights were interdependent.

37. Mr. VENUSTE (Rwanda), replying to the statement made by the representative of Ireland on behalf of the European Union, said that his delegation refuted the evaluation of the situation in his country as hostile to the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms. His Government had halted the genocide and massacres, and peace had returned to the country since the new Government had been installed in July 1996. On its own initiative the Government, which was composed of five different political parties, had established a national reconciliation committee. Five thousand members of the previous Rwandan armed forces had spontaneously joined the new national army.

38. The improvement in prison conditions could be attested by those who were providing assistance in the field of justice and human rights. Their two years of hard work in Rwanda should not be underestimated. That explained the request for supplementary resources.

39. With regard to the lack of a functioning impartial judicial system, the Special Rapporteur had indicated in his report (A/51/657) that the system needed rehabilitation on institutional, human-resource and material levels. He wondered how it was possible to demand an impartial system when the system itself did not exist.

40. The new law that differentiated criminal responsibility for the genocide, which had been passed in August 1996 and welcomed by the European Union, had established categories of responsibility for that crime. The European Union should therefore concentrate on assisting the Rwandan Government in removing the remaining obstacles, rather than preaching to the converted.

41. It was hardly possible to compare the achievements of the Rwandan Government to those of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, which enjoyed an annual budget of $36 million.

42. While thanking those who had provided assistance, he stressed that the long-hoped-for mass return of Rwandan refugees was a challenge to the whole international community. Those who had provided and would provide assistance would be judged by their actions rather than their comments.

43. Mr. MICHA ONDO BILE (Equatorial Guinea), replying to the statement made by the representative of Ireland on behalf of the European Union, said that it was easy to criticize, but his country was a fledgling democracy with little

experience. With only limited resources, the first independent elections in the 28 years since independence had been organized and carried out without any ethnic conflict. More than 50 international observers had witnessed the fact that the elections had taken place in a climate of peace and harmony.

44. Mr. AL-MUMAIMIDI (Iraq), replying to the statements made by the representative of Ireland on behalf of the European Union and the representative of Canada, said that since the statement by the former had been based on the report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iraq (E/CN.4/1996/61), the reply of Iraq (A/C.3/51/3) would be an adequate response to that statement. However, he would like to remark on a number of specific items, and to begin by noting the statement's lack of objectivity. It had ignored the amnesty offered to prisoners, and the introduction of new democratic procedures, such as the election for the office of President.

45. With regard to the irrigation projects being carried out in the marsh areas of the south, the statement had completely ignored the fact that the work being carried out was merely the implementation of a number of irrigation projects which had been drawn up by United States, European and Japanese companies many years ago. Because of those projects, the area was now playing an important role in the development of the country.

46. With regard to Iraq's cooperation with United Nations human rights bodies, he wished to stress that his Government genuinely cooperated in every way, and to suggest otherwise demonstrated hostility and lack of objectivity.

47. Referring to the statement made by the representative of Canada, he said that the latter had ignored the political and social situation in Iraq. It was not possible for the Government of Iraq to violate the human rights of the Kurdish people when it had no presence or military forces in the Kurdish areas. With regard to the representative's remarks concerning the Shi'ites, he said that they were Muslim Iraqis living in all parts of the country, who were an integral part of society, rather than a separate entity.

48. Mr. RI Song Il (Democratic People's Republic of Korea), replying to the statement made by the representative of Ireland on behalf of the European Union, said that the false, distorted and slanderous remarks about his country had debased the dignity of his Republic and people. There could be no human rights problem under a socialism which was centred on the popular masses, which were masters of State and society. His society was like a large, harmonious family, overflowing with honourable morality. The Government had responsibility for the destiny and future of the individual, in addition to its human rights. That was unimaginable in capitalist society, where extreme individualism, competitiveness and immortality prevailed.

49. With regard to the armistice agreement of 1953, that had already been paralysed by the negative attitude of the other party, and made no contribution to peace and security in the peninsula. His country proposed to replace the outdated agreement with a peace agreement, having a rather greater interest in peace and security on the peninsula than many others, and having a greater awareness of how the issue could be resolved. It was not appropriate to raise the issue of the armistice agreement in a meeting devoted to human rights. It

was possible, in view of the politicization of human rights, that security matters were being confused with human rights matters.

50. The statement made by the representative of Ireland had been an example of the selectivity, double standards, hypocrisy and arbitrariness to be found in the field of human rights. While paying close attention to human rights in other countries, the members of the European Union were closing their eyes to violations of human rights in their own countries, satellites and allies. That would make the Third Committee a place of confrontation rather than a place in which to resolve human rights issues, and such an attitude would ultimately threaten world peace and security. Further to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, his delegation would make every effort to combat any attempt at confrontation or to abuse human rights issues.

51. Ms. LAIZANE (Latvia) said that, when joining the United Nations in 1991, her country had clearly stated that it was not a successor State to the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, the Russian Federation, which was a successor State to the Soviet Union, had withdrawn its military forces from Latvia only in 1994, largely due to pressure from the United Nations and the international community. The Soviet Union had occupied Latvia in 1940 and almost 1 million immigrants had come with the occupying army, while hundreds of thousands of Latvian citizens had been deported from the country. Despite that injustice, upon the restoration of its independence in 1991, Latvia had chosen to integrate the people who had entered the country during the 50 years of occupation. Integration, of course, was a complex process, of which the acquisition of citizenship was only a part.

52. There were currently 2.5 million residents in Latvia. More than 70 per cent of them were citizens of Latvia, of whom almost 400,000 were of non-Latvian origin. Permanent residents could become citizens after completing the naturalization procedures. Under the 1994 law on citizenship, the requirements for becoming a citizen through naturalization were five years residence; a basic knowledge of the Latvian language, constitution and history; and an oath of loyalty. Citizenship, of course, involved rights and obligations, including service in the Latvian army. Consequently, of the more than 100,000 persons eligible for naturalization in 1996, only 1 per cent had actually applied for citizenship. Unfortunately, her Government's approach was not understood by the Russian Federation, which criticized Latvia for not granting automatic citizenship to all people who had immigrated to Latvia during the years of occupation.

53. The Latvian Government attached priority to guaranteeing fundamental human rights for all its residents. The judicial system had been reformed; the necessary legislation had been adopted; and a human rights office had been established. Latvia's achievements in the field of human rights had been objectively and favourably evaluated by United Nations and other international bodies. The United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of the Baltic Sea States had stated that there were no massive or grave human rights violations in Latvia. Only one country had chosen to ignore those assessments, apparently owing to neo-imperialist and post-colonialist interests of some political groupings in that country.

54. Mr. NAJEM (Lebanon) said that Israel, having occupied southern Lebanon since 1978, had refused to withdraw its forces, as called for under Security Council resolution 425 (1978). His delegation did not see any desire for peace on the part of the Israeli Government. The continued Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon led to human rights violations on a daily basis and acts of violence directed against the civilian population, the latest of which had been the massacre of more than 100 innocent persons in Qana.

55. The conditions laid down by Israel for withdrawing from southern Lebanon were unacceptable. The Lebanese Government was responsible for defending the country's international borders and would not protect the Israeli occupation of its land. He reaffirmed the right of the Lebanese people in accordance with international law to resist foreign occupation. Israel's so-called security zone in southern Lebanon, which was based on a policy of violence and the use of force, had not provided security for Israel. Peace and stability in that area could be achieved only if Israel withdrew its occupation forces.

56. Mr. WIDODO (Indonesia) said that certain delegations had made unwarranted statements with regard to the human rights situation in Indonesia and East Timor. It was regrettable that they had resorted to a campaign of disinformation against his country. Such posturing could not lead to anything positive in the Committee's deliberations. Indonesia had made every effort to implement the recommendations of the Commission on Human Rights and had demonstrated its commitment to cooperate with all relevant United Nations human rights mechanisms.

57. His Government had established a human rights office in East Timor in order to promote and protect the human rights of the people there and foster their hopes and aspirations. If there were any remaining problems in East Timor, the appropriate framework for discussing them was the dialogue between Indonesia and Portugal conducted under the auspices of the Secretary-General. Accordingly, it was hoped that the States that had criticized Indonesia would exercise self-restraint and help create an atmosphere conducive to resolving the matter.

58. Mr. ARDA (Turkey) said that every country, including member States of the European Union, Australia and Turkey, had shortcomings both with regard to legislation on and the implementation of human rights. In Turkey, all democratic institutions, including the Parliament, an independent judiciary and a free press, functioned fully. Turkey constantly strove to improve its democracy and the protection of human rights. At the same time, it was combating, in full accordance with the rule of law, a deadly wave of terrorism, directed against its territorial integrity and constitutional order. That terrorism was encouraged externally, even in certain member States of the European Union. Despite their obligations under international law, some of those countries were sanctuaries for terrorists and terrorist activities. His delegation therefore urged the member States of the European Union to comply with their obligations under international law in that regard.

59. It was hard to understand why Australia had inquired about minority rights for Turkish citizens of Kurdish origin. All Turkish citizens enjoyed equal rights without any discrimination on the basis of ethnic background, race, sex or religion. Turkey did not differentiate among its citizens according to ethnicity or race. In that connection, he pointed out that almost a third of

the members of the Turkish Parliament were of Kurdish origin. His delegation also wished to inform the representative of Norway that a delegation of the Council of Europe concerned with the question of torture had visited Turkey upon the invitation of his Government several months earlier.

60. Lastly, he indicated that, in order to ensure a more fruitful discussion of human rights, it was essential to avoid one-sided, politically-motivated statements, such as those given by the European Union, Norway and Australia.

61. Mr. OTUYELU (Nigeria) said that the accusations of human rights violations levelled against his country by the European Union, Norway and Canada did not reflect the real situation in Nigeria and demonstrated a refusal to accept genuine information on the democratization and promotion of human rights there. He wished to point out to the delegation of Norway that Mrs. Abiola had been murdered by criminals and that the Nigerian police had made several arrests in the case and were continuing the investigation. Nigeria was one of the countries with the freest press and the highest degree of freedom of speech. His Government had not prevented any special rapporteurs from visiting Nigeria, but had sought, like any other Government, to arrange a proper reception in order to make such visits successful.

62. The Government was committed to a return to democratic rule in October 1998. Local elections on a non-party basis had already taken place and local government elections on a party basis were scheduled for December 1996. An additional 138 local governments had been established in order to further decentralize power in Nigeria. Five new political parties had been registered, which was a major step in the transition to democracy. Nigeria was irreversibly committed to restoring democracy and needed the support of all in that effort.

63. Mr. DAVID (Israel) said that, if Lebanon had respected Israeli sovereignty and its right to live within peaceful and secure borders, both countries would have benefited from the resulting peace and security. Israel accepted Security Council resolution 425 (1978) and had no claims to any Lebanese territory. Nevertheless, Lebanon could not expect to allow constant deadly attacks from its territory against Israel without bearing the consequences. Accordingly, his delegation once again called on Lebanon to put an end to the attacks against Israeli civilians and choose negotiations and peace over war and aggression.

64. Mr. NAJEM (Lebanon), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the Lebanese people were resisting foreign occupation by Israel. The Israeli Government must respect international legality and implement Security Council resolution 425 (1978). Although Israel had repeatedly carried out acts of aggression against Lebanon and its civilian population, it had never succeeded and would never succeed through war and violence. The only solution was Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.